



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN
DELTA CONSERVANCY

3500 Industrial Blvd.
West Sacramento, CA 95691
<http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov>

Summary of Informational Interviews with Strategic Planning Experts and Consideration of Options for a Professional Facilitator

Requested Action: Decide on next steps for securing professional facilitator

Background

At its November 3, 2010, meeting the Delta Conservancy Board established a subcommittee to advise staff in the Board's strategic planning efforts, and directed staff to proceed with organizing and securing necessary resources for the organizational work and strategic planning processes. The Board directed the subcommittee to review and make revisions to the November 3rd staff report regarding the timing and phasing of the strategic planning process. The Board also directed the subcommittee to review and make recommendations regarding the October 18th Delta Ecosystem White Paper drafted for the Delta Stewardship Council.

Six people agreed to serve on the subcommittee: Chuck Bonham, Steve Chappell, Mike Eaton, Robin Kulakow, Jim Provenza, and Ken Vogel.

Delta Conservancy staff conducted informational interviews with 11 industry and state experts regarding options for the Board to complete its strategic plan.

Summary of Informational Interviews

All experts presented similar general information regarding strategic planning. All mentioned conducting individual interviews with Board members, and summarizing and synthesizing those interviews into usable data. After individual interviews are conducted, the strategic plan would be developed using a variety of methods including surveys and questionnaires, SWOT analyses (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threats), facilitated Board workshops, and public stakeholder workshops.

All experts would tailor their approach to the Conservancy's needs, based upon the results of the individual interviews. This would include developing the principles by which the Board would develop the strategic plan, for example, using a majority vote

rather than consensus to make decisions. All experts suggest developing the mission and vision as a first element of the strategic plan.

Most of the experts stressed that because this is the Conservancy's first strategic plan, it was important to take the time to produce a usable document. Since most strategic plans are 3-5 years out, the experts emphasized spending time developing the Conservancy's guiding principles as an initial focus for the Board. The experts also stressed the need to build in flexibility and adaptability into the strategic plan.

How quickly the strategic plan is completed depends on how much effort the Board wants to devote to the task. The process can be expedited by:

- using surveys and worksheets as an initial way of bring forth discussion topics and ideas;
- scheduling several full day meetings to develop the strategic plan elements;
- directing the Strategic Plan Subcommittee or other advisory groups to draft the strategic plan elements for consideration by the full Board; or
- contracting out the strategic plan to a consultant to develop and write within a specified time frame.

Regarding facilitator expertise on Delta issues, the experts all agreed that there were advantages and disadvantages to requiring the facilitator be a Delta environmental and water policy subject matter expert. The advantages include an awareness of the political sensitivities and the ability to adjust the process accordingly, the facilitator would know where to anticipate and reduce potential conflicts, and they would be familiar with the Delta policy jargon used by other experts. The disadvantages include the potential for the facilitator to bring their biases on subjects to the process and that there could be a perceived conflict of interest depending upon other projects on which the facilitator has worked previously. There also could be the issue of whether or not the Conservancy would be receiving original work or work from previous projects.

While all of the experts interviewed could assist the Board in developing its strategic plan, two scenarios for approaching this process emerged. First, some experts would focus mainly on facilitating the meetings and would have the Board, sub-committee and staff drafting the strategic plan language. The second scenario would have the expert working as part of a small team providing facilitation and additional consultants to draft the strategic plan language for the Board. All experts interviewed expressed an interest to work closely with Conservancy staff and the sub-committee during this planning process.

State Contracting Options

A state contract is necessary to secure the services of a facilitator or small team of consultants. There are three main contracting options the Conservancy could use to hire a facilitator for its strategic plan: the Interagency Agreement, the California Multiple Awards Schedule (CMAS), or the competitive bid process.

Interagency Agreement. An interagency agreement (I/A) is a contract between two or more state agencies, including a California State University campus. I/As are exempt from advertising in the California State Contracts Register (CSCR) and from competitive bidding, which makes it one of the quickest ways of contracting for services.

The Department of General Services (DGS) approval is required for I/As of \$50,000 or more, unless the agency has a higher delegated authority. The Conservancy has a delegated authority of \$50,000.

Master Agreements. The California Multiple Awards Schedule (CMAS) is the resource for statewide master agreements, which are contracts bid by DGS for services and consulting services that are used by many departments.

Master Agreements take advantage of the state's buying power. Prices are often less than those a single agency could obtain on its own. Any state agency can use the statewide Master Agreements. Master Agreements take care of the bidding process and other administrative details.

Master Agreements allow an agency to obtain needed services quickly and easily, avoiding the delay and uncertainty of the bid process.

Competitive Bidding Process. This process is the one most people think of with state contracts. It is a formal process in which a department writes a scope of work and other contract requirements, establishes judging criteria, and publically reviews and scores the submitted proposals. A minimum of three competitive bids or proposals are typically required, although there are some exemptions to this (e.g., for emergencies). Potential bidders must be formally notified of the bid opportunity through CSCR advertisements, which has a specified time for response. Typical competitive bidding contracts take three to six months to enact.

Fiscal Information

Through salary savings, the Conservancy has approximately \$100,000 currently for its strategic planning effort. The Conservancy has \$500,000 in reimbursable budget authority, some of which can be used for the strategic plan. Reimbursable budget authority means that the Conservancy can spend up to \$500,000 in funds from any source if it can locate those funds.

Hourly quotes for services ranged from \$200 to \$250.

Contact

Nancy Ullrey, Program Lead
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
916-375-2987